

# SUGAR BEETS

## SUGAR BEETS NEXT IN IMPORTANCE TO FRUIT RAISING.

The sugar beet industry in Colorado has grown in ten years to be the premier agricultural industry in the state. The advent of the sugar beet made towns and hamlets grow like magic, advanced the price of land from \$75 an acre to \$150 and \$200, and in some instances as high as \$300 an acre. Farmers have become wealthy cultivating the saccharine producing plant, and today the manufacture of beet sugar is by far the leading industry of the two great agricultural sections of the state—Northern Colorado and the Arkansas Valley.

In 1907 the huge sum of \$15,750,000 was paid the farmers and workers in the beet fields, and 150,000 acres of land was devoted to the growing of beets. The total annual production of sugar beets in 1907 was 2,100,000 tons. The sugar extracted from these beets was almost enough to supply the demands of the population west of the Mississippi river and was valued at \$25,000,000.

The sugar beet industry has passed

the experimental stage and the farmers of Colorado find it the most profitable crop they can raise. Today there are 16 sugar factories in Colorado, nearly one-fourth of the entire number of beet sugar factories in the United States. There is still room for more factories in Colorado, for the reason that there are many acres of land in this state that possess the essential qualities for the growing of the sugar beets, and the market is far from being overstocked with beet sugar.

The average net profit per acre realized by a farmer is \$40. These crops yield from \$70 to \$150 an acre. These figures speak for themselves. Another advantage to the farmer in raising sugar beets is the knowledge that the market price is assured before he plants his crop. The prevailing market price is \$5.00 a ton delivered to a factory or a railroad receiving station as soon as harvested. An additional 50 cents a ton is allowed the farmer who silos his beets; that is, places them in the ground to be held until they are called for by the factory. The factory contracts with the farmer at the beginning of the

growing season, so the grower knows just where he stands when he plants his seed.

For the purpose of strengthening the soil, beets are rotated with alfalfa, small grains and vegetables. Alfalfa is the best fertilizer and beets grown on land that has been previously planted to this class produces remarkable results.

The value to the farmer of raising sugar beets does not end with the sale of the crop at the factory. The by-products also enter into his calculation of benefits. Sugar beet pulp supplies a fattening food for stock. The pulp can be bought from the factory at 40 cents a ton and it contains a high degree of fat producing qualities. Experiments made by the State Agricultural College at Fort Collins have demonstrated beyond a doubt that beet pulp produces in the animal meat value of \$1.50 to \$2.50 for each ton of feed.

The benefits to the "critter" eating pulp is both nutritive and sanitary. Feeders are often inclined to use too much heat generating food, which leads to stomach and intestinal disturbances. Pulp mixed with the regular feed ration acts as a laxative, which keeps the animal in a healthful condition and permits the fattening

process to continue uninterrupted. Cattle fed on sugar beet pulp are in great demand in the market, owing to the fact that their flesh is juicy and of fine flavor.

Absolute cleanliness in feeding pulp is necessary, as the pulp will decay if allowed to remain in the corners of the feed troughs; therefore it is necessary to feed the pulp only in quantities that will assure its immediate consumption. The troughs should be cleaned thoroughly before another feeding.

The establishment of beet sugar factories in different parts of the state has stimulated other industries that are part of the success of the farmer. The packing industry is enlivened, and creamery and cheese factories are increased in number. The ramifications of this industry are such that its effects are felt in every line of trade. No other industry has done so much to upbuild the towns of Colorado in the beet sugar districts, and no other industry except fruit has or can increase the value of land to such an extent as the growing of this plant. The factory towns are active business centers.

In 1899 there was one sugar factory in Colorado. Last year there were 16 factories in operation and the same number will be in operation this year. The capacity of the original factory has been doubled and those built later have from two to four times the capacity of the first plant. Beets grown in Colorado carry a high percentage of saccharine matter and the sugar extracted from the beets is of an exceptionally high grade.

Eight years ago 3,000 acres in Colorado were devoted to the raising of sugar beets, for which \$200,000 was paid. Compare these figures with those for 1907 and the wonderful strides of this industry are apparent.

The average farmer realizes from \$70 to \$90 an acre gross from his beet crop, but there are many instances where \$100 and over per acre have been received from the crop. \$150 an acre is the highest price on record in Colorado.

Each year sees the acreage increased as the growers become more proficient in cultivating their crops. The industry has come to stay.—Professor Knorr in Ranch and Range.

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